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## INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES, AUSTRALIA, DECEMBER 1990

### PHONE INQUIRIES

- *about these statistics and the availability of related unpublished statistics*—contact Brenda McMorro on Canberra (06) 252 6561 or any ABS State office.
- *about other statistics and ABS services*—contact Information Services on Canberra (06) 252 6007, 252 6627, 252 5402 or any ABS State office.

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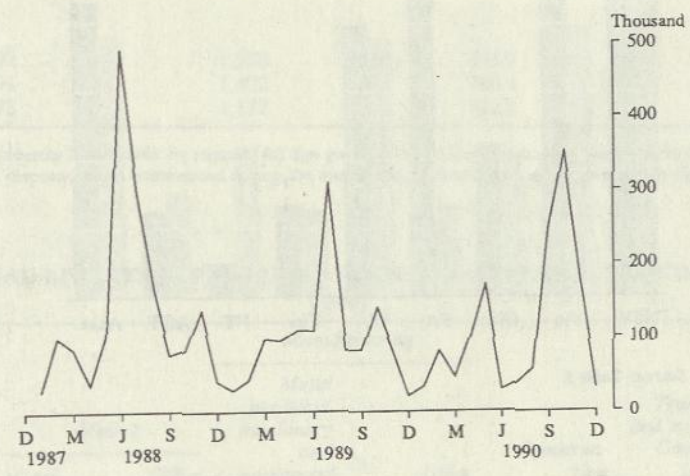
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## MAIN FEATURES

CHART 1. WORKING DAYS LOST, AUSTRALIA



Source: Table 1.

### In December 1990—

- 54 disputes were reported in progress, involving 27,200 employees and the loss of 31,500 working days. This is a substantial decrease from November 1990 when there were 126 disputes in progress and 178,800 working days lost.
- In the Mining (other than Coal Mining) industry, 300 working days lost were reported. This is the lowest figure for this industry since April 1972 when 300 working days were reported lost. The Transport and Storage; Communication industry recorded 400 working days lost, the lowest since the introduction of the monthly publication in October 1969.
- Of the States, Victoria recorded the highest number of working days lost (18,100) which represents 57 per cent of total time lost (31,500). In Queensland there were 3,000 working days lost, the lowest since December 1988 (2,800).

### In the twelve months ended December 1990—

- A total of 1,177 disputes were in progress with 726,200 workers involved and the loss of 1,366,900 working days. This is the highest number for a twelve month period for Australia since the year to May 1989 (1,664,400).
- Because of the high level of disputation in the period September to November 1990 the Metal products, machinery and equipment manufacturing industry continues to report high figures with 535,400 working days lost compared to 201,100 in the year to December 1989. The Transport and Storage; Communication industry reported 129,800 working days lost which is the lowest number for a twelve month period since April 1990 (128,700).

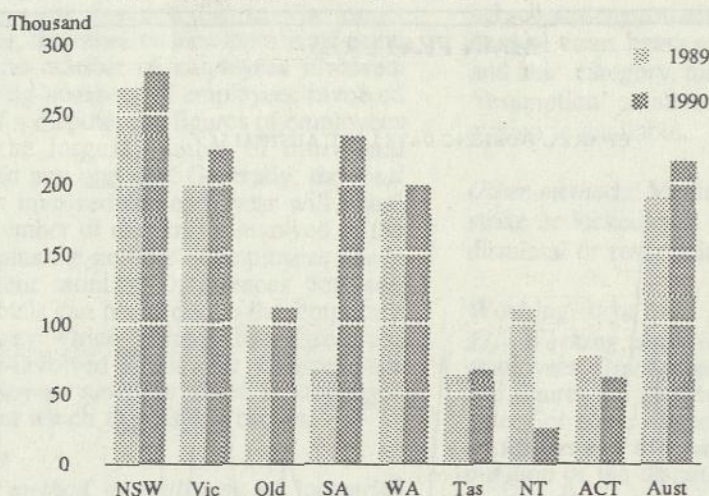


- At the State level, New South Wales reported 615,900 working days lost and Western Australia reported 108,400 working days lost, which are the highest number of working days lost in a twelve month period for those States since October 1989. The figures then were 635,800 and 130,900 respectively. In contrast, the Northern Territory with 1,700 working days lost is the lowest figure for this State since this measure was first published on a regular monthly basis in December 1981.

In terms of working days lost per thousand employees:

- The Metal products, machinery and equipment manufacturing industry recorded a figure of 1,287, the highest since August 1982 (1,491).
- Western Australia recorded 200 working days lost, the highest since October 1989 (243) while the Northern Territory reported 26, the lowest on record.

CHART 2. WORKING DAYS LOST PER THOUSAND EMPLOYEES,  
12 MONTHS ENDING DECEMBER 1989 AND 1990



Source: Table 5.

## NOTES

The statistics of industrial disputes are compiled mainly from data obtained from employers (both private and public sector) and trade unions concerning individual disputes, and from reports of government authorities.

The statistics relate to disputes which involved stoppages of work in which ten working days or more were lost at the establishments where the stoppages occurred.

Statistics on working days lost per thousand employees are calculated using estimates of employment from the Survey of Employment and Earnings and the Labour Force Survey. It should be noted that recent employment estimates from the Survey of Employment and Earnings are subject to revision as a result of changes being made to the ABS's register of businesses. This may result in revisions to estimates of working days lost per thousand employees. For further details refer to the explanatory notes of the publication *Employed Wage and Salary Earners, Australia* (6248.0).

Explanatory Notes and a Glossary are published on pages 6 to 8 of this publication.

IAN CASTLES  
Australian Statistician



TABLE 1. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS : AUSTRALIA(a)

Period	Number of disputes(b)		Employees involved ('000)		Working days lost ('000)
	Commenced in period	Total(c)	Newly involved(d)	Total(c)	
1989—					
October	119	127	119.5	122.4	141.0
November	132	143	30.0	65.7	81.8
December	50	63	4.6	10.0	20.8
1990—					
January	68	72	8.9	12.9	33.9
February	110	119	51.7	55.5	81.9
March	112	127	20.0	44.2	46.1
April	79	84	68.6	69.2	100.8
May	117	137	116.9	149.3	171.2
June	94	104	22.2	23.9	29.1
July	94	109	34.3	36.9	38.6
August r	116	124	48.2	49.3	57.5
September r	110	121	218.9	232.3	244.9
October r	128	149	95.4	276.3	352.5
November r	97	126	17.5	231.5	178.8
December	48	54	19.7	27.2	31.5
Twelve months ended—					
December 1988	1,502	1,508	893.9	894.4	1,641.4
1989	1,391	1,402	706.4	709.8	1,202.4
1990	1,173	1,177	722.2	726.2	1,366.9

(a) More detailed information by State and industry is available on request. (b) See paragraph 5 of the Explanatory Notes. (c) Refers to all disputes in progress during the period. (d) Comprises employees involved in disputes which commenced during the month and additional employees involved in disputes which continued from the previous month.

TABLE 2. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS : INDUSTRY, AUSTRALIA, WORKING DAYS LOST(a)  
( '000)

Period	Manufacturing							All industries
	Mining		Metal products, machinery and equipment	Other	Construction	Transport and storage; Communication	Other industries (b)	
	Coal	Other						
1989—								
October	14.4	1.0	2.9	7.8	8.0	7.6	99.2	141.0
November	13.5	2.4	4.3	30.4	3.0	3.2	25.1	81.8
December	2.3	1.6	0.6	5.7	4.5	4.9	1.2	20.8
1990—								
January	7.8	1.2	0.5	3.5	3.2	17.5	0.3	33.9
February	20.8	3.1	4.2	10.2	5.5	8.5	29.7	81.9
March	12.5	0.8	1.3	5.7	0.9	3.2	21.7	46.1
April	3.5	2.1	0.6	6.6	18.1	52.9	16.9	100.8
May	18.4	11.2	21.0	15.7	2.1	28.1	74.7	171.2
June	12.4	2.4	2.9	1.6	0.4	2.2	7.2	29.1
July	7.1	1.6	5.3	5.2	8.8	1.7	8.9	38.6
August	r12.0	2.9	5.2	12.7	4.8	2.6	17.4	r57.5
September	r13.6	15.9	172.4	16.8	5.6	1.9	18.7	r244.9
October	r15.1	35.8	225.2	28.8	8.7	9.7	29.2	r352.5
November	r13.2	9.4	93.3	23.8	3.7	r1.1	r34.3	r178.8
December	7.1	0.3	3.5	1.6	0.1	0.4	18.4	31.5
Twelve months ended—								
December 1988	471.3	97.4	309.5	117.4	207.9	75.0	362.9	1,641.4
1989	164.8	34.2	201.1	186.7	117.0	70.7	427.9	1,202.4
1990	143.4	86.6	535.4	132.1	62.0	129.8	277.5	1,366.9

(a) More detailed industry information is available on request. (b) Comprises Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting; Electricity, gas and water; Wholesale and retail trade; Finance, property and business services; Public administration and defence; Community services; Recreation, personal and other services.



TABLE 3. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS : STATES AND TERRITORIES, AUSTRALIA, WORKING DAYS LOST(a)  
(<sup>'000</sup>)

Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
1989—									
October	67.0	49.6	14.8	1.6	3.0	2.5	0.4	2.1	141.0
November	33.0	25.4	11.3	5.5	5.7	0.7	0.2	0.2	81.3
December	2.0	9.6	6.9	0.3	1.6	0.2	0.1	—	20.8
1990—									
January	4.9	20.5	4.4	0.7	3.2	—	0.1	0.1	33.9
February	25.5	39.2	7.5	3.2	5.6	0.3	0.5	0.1	81.9
March	21.6	13.5	3.2	4.2	2.9	0.7	0.1	—	46.1
April	5.0	69.0	5.9	8.3	7.7	3.1	0.4	1.3	100.8
May	86.2	42.1	15.4	18.9	8.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	171.2
June	14.3	2.4	3.5	1.1	3.1	0.3	—	4.3	29.1
July	19.9	9.9	3.5	1.7	2.3	1.1	—	0.1	38.6
August	r15.8	15.4	13.3	5.8	6.4	0.7	—	0.1	r57.5
September	r154.6	31.5	14.2	34.7	9.8	—	—	—	r244.9
October	r177.6	78.4	17.8	31.7	43.6	3.0	0.3	0.1	r352.5
November	r84.5	r49.8	16.2	14.3	13.4	0.4	0.1	—	r178.8
December	6.0	18.1	3.0	—	2.2	0.8	—	1.4	31.5
Twelve months ended—									
December 1988	730.1	362.6	299.5	46.9	160.6	18.6	8.9	14.1	1,641.4
1989	589.6	348.4	100.5	35.0	102.1	10.2	6.9	9.6	1,202.4
1990	615.9	389.9	107.9	124.6	108.4	10.7	1.7	7.9	1,366.9

(a) State by industry information is available on request.

TABLE 4. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS : BY INDUSTRY, AUSTRALIA,  
WORKING DAYS LOST PER THOUSAND EMPLOYEES(a)

Period	Manufacturing							All industries
	Mining		Metal products, machinery and equipment	Other	Construc- tion	Transport and storage; Communi- cation	Other industries (b)	
	Coal	Other						
Twelve months ended--								
1986--								
December	10,741	3,328	445	328	458	135	72	242
1987--								
December	8,920	1,072	479	305	743	217	70	223
1988--								
December	15,548	1,777	750	183	725	177	85	269
1989--								
October	7,566	1,236	483	263	380	162	96	204
November	6,111	664	475	285	381	152	98	194
December	5,505	642	473	283	374	160	97	190
1990--								
January	5,489	622	468	284	375	187	96	190
February	5,908	651	444	288	381	199	101	196
March	5,924	585	416	230	361	174	105	188
April	6,316	640	407	258	429	318	105	205
May	5,423	746	353	244	357	340	109	198
June	5,054	620	285	216	317	338	109	185
July	4,432	612	163	196	211	317	77	143
August	r4,397	623	123	196	213	309	76	139
September	r4,586	866	524	191	208	308	72	165
October	r4,574	1,524	1,056	225	212	313	56	198
November	r4,534	1,660	1,274	215	216	309	r58	r214
December	4,660	1,643	1,287	210	203	300	62	216

(a) See paragraph 4 of the Explanatory Notes. (b) Comprises Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting; Electricity, gas and water; Wholesale and retail trade; Finance, property and business services; Public administration and defence; Community services; Recreation, personal and other services.



TABLE 5. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES IN PROGRESS : STATES AND TERRITORIES, AUSTRALIA,  
WORKING DAYS LOST PER THOUSAND EMPLOYEES(a)

Period	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
Twelve months ended—									
1986—									
December	304	240	207	95	272	190	199	55	242
1987—									
December	366	172	87	91	213	177	110	143	223
1988—									
December	341	214	336	93	299	118	158	112	269
1989—									
October	293	192	120	62	243	63	131	82	204
November	279	200	99	70	190	62	128	77	194
December	269	199	102	67	187	64	111	77	190
1990—									
January	265	210	98	66	189	56	99	74	190
February	267	229	94	68	195	57	96	75	196
March	248	225	90	64	195	60	88	71	188
April	254	276	97	79	180	64	85	87	205
May	248	257	101	107	153	59	74	79	198
June	229	239	100	103	139	60	72	113	185
July	157	185	99	101	116	60	60	107	143
August	r147	183	102	102	116	61	56	94	139
September	r204	189	106	162	109	61	30	68	165
October	r254	205	109	218	184	64	29	52	198
November	r278	r220	115	235	199	63	27	51	r214
December	280	225	112	234	200	67	26	62	216

(a) See paragraph 4 of the Explanatory Notes.

TABLE 6. INDUSTRIAL DISPUTES ENDING IN THE 12 MONTHS TO DECEMBER 1990 : AUSTRALIA,  
REPORTED CAUSE, DURATION AND METHOD OF SETTLEMENT(a)

	Number of disputes	Employees involved (directly and indirectly) ('000)	Working days lost ('000)
CAUSE OF DISPUTE			
Wages	104	81.6	150.7
Hours of work	18	2.3	4.3
Leave, pensions, compensation	42	6.2	20.4
Managerial policy	587	524.0	1,053.4
Physical working conditions	215	32.9	98.0
Trade unionism	171	37.8	52.3
Other(b)	37	30.9	24.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,174</b>	<b>715.7</b>	<b>1,403.6</b>
DURATION OF DISPUTE			
Up to and including 1 day	788	422.3	417.4
Over 1 and up to and including 2 days	175	242.6	604.7
Over 2 and less than 5 days	109	27.3	97.4
5 and less than 10 days	71	13.7	92.9
10 and less than 20 days	21	5.2	67.8
20 days and over	10	4.7	123.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,174</b>	<b>715.7</b>	<b>1,403.6</b>
METHOD OF SETTLEMENT			
Negotiation	179	127.7	213.7
State legislation	106	58.3	167.4
Federal and joint Federal-State legislation	134	116.0	364.0
Resumption without negotiation	738	411.8	654.5
Other methods	17	1.8	3.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,174</b>	<b>715.7</b>	<b>1,403.6</b>

(a) More detailed information by State and industry is available on request. (b) Includes disputes not elsewhere categorised.



## EXPLANATORY NOTES

## Introduction

The statistics in this publication relate to disputes which involved stoppages of work of ten working days or more at the establishments where the stoppages occurred. Ten working days is equivalent to the amount of ordinary time worked by ten people in one day, regardless of the length of stoppage, for example, 3,000 workers on strike for 2 hours would be counted as 750 working days lost (assuming they work an 8 hour day).

2. The statistics of working days lost relate to the losses due to industrial disputes only (as defined in paragraph 2 of the Glossary). Effects on other establishments, such as stand-downs because of lack of materials, disruption of transport services, power cuts, etc. are not included.

3. The statistics of industrial disputes are compiled mainly from data obtained from employers (both private and public sector), from trade unions and from reports of government authorities. Particulars of some stoppages may have been estimated and the statistics therefore should be regarded as giving only a broad measure of the extent of industrial disputes as defined above.

## Change in methodology

4. The basis for the calculation of working days lost per thousand employees was changed in January 1987 to include estimates of employees from the Survey of Employment and Earnings. They are combined with estimates of the number of employees in agriculture and in private households, obtained from the Labour Force Survey. Estimates have been recalculated on this basis for each month back to June 1984 and are available on request. In issues of this publication prior to January 1987, the estimates of numbers of employees were based entirely on Labour Force Survey data. The effect of the change is minimal at the 'all industries' level but is quite significant, in some cases, for individual industry groups.

5. The basis for the calculation of the number of disputes was changed in December 1987 (see paragraph 2 of the Glossary). Before that date, where the causes of several disputes were the same (e.g. National Wage Case disputes) the disputes were counted as one dispute in each State or Territory in which they occurred, irrespective of whether they were directed or organised by one person or organisation, or whether the dispute occurred in more than one industry. The reason for the change was to align the method of counting the number of disputes with the International Labour Organisation guidelines. In accordance with this change in definition, estimates of the number of disputes shown in this bulletin for past periods have been revised. In issues of this publication prior to September 1988, the number of disputes were counted on the old basis. Unpublished estimates of the number of disputes have been revised on the new basis from January 1985 and are available on request. The number of employees involved and working days lost remain unchanged.

## Reliability of estimates

6. Inaccuracies may occur because of imperfections in information provided by respondents or in processing by the ABS. Although considerable care is taken in questionnaire design; in the instructions given to respondents; and in editing the returns; these inaccuracies may occur in any enumeration, whether it be a full count or a sample.

## Other ABS publications

7. Users may also wish to refer to the following publications:

*Labour Statistics, Australia*, (6101.0) — issued annually

*The Labour Force, Australia, Preliminary* (6202.0) — issued monthly

*The Labour Force, Australia* (6203.0) — issued monthly

*Trade Union Statistics, Australia*, (6323.0) — issued annually

*Trade Union Members, Australia, August 1988* (6325.0)

*Employed Wage and Salary Earners, Australia* (6248.0) — issued quarterly

*Award Rates of Pay Indexes, Australia* (6312.0) — issued monthly

## Unpublished statistics

8. A range of unpublished data is also available on request including dispute details at more detailed industry levels, cross-classified by States/Territories, and finer cause of dispute and method of settlement categories than those published. Considerable time series exist for most variables. Inquiries regarding data availability and associated charges should be directed to Brenda McMorrow on (06) 252 6561.

9. Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications and Products, Australia* (1101.0). The ABS also issues, on Tuesdays and Fridays, a *Publications Advice* (1105.0) which lists publications to be released in the next few days. The Catalogue and Publications Advice are available from any ABS office.

## Symbols and other usages

r estimates revised since last issue  
— nil or rounded to zero

10. Where estimates have been rounded, discrepancies may occur between sums of the component items and totals.

## Electronic services

DISCOVERY. Key \* 656# for selected current economic, social and demographic statistics.

AUSSTATS. Thousands of up-to-date time series are available on this ABS on-line service. For further information phone the AUSSTATS Help Desk on (06) 252 6017.

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- text and tables for selected Main Economic Indicator publications. Further information is available on (06) 252 5405.

## Floppy disk service

Selected ABS statistics are available on floppy disk. Further information is available on (06) 252 6684.



## GLOSSARY

**Cause of dispute**

The statistics of causes of industrial disputes relate to the reported main cause of the stoppage of work and not necessarily all causes that may have been responsible for the stoppage of work. For these reasons, the statistics do not reflect the relative importance of all causes of disputes as perceived by both employers and employees. The causes are classified from information supplied by employers and according to standards determined by the International Labour Organisation. The classification of causes is as follows:

**Wages.** Claims involving general principles relating to wages e.g. increase (decrease) in wages; variation in method of payment or combined claims relating to wages, hours or conditions of work in which the claim about wages is deemed to be the most important. Combined claims in which other claims are deemed to be the most important are included under the relevant cause. Disputes over award restructuring are included under managerial policy.

**Hours of work.** Claims involving general principles relating to hours of work e.g. decrease (increase) in hours; distribution of hours.

**Leave, pensions, compensation.** Claims involving general principles relating to holiday and leave provisions; pension and retirement provisions; workers' compensation provisions; insertion of penal clause provisions in awards.

**Managerial policy.** Disputes concerning the exercise of managerial control by employers e.g. terms and conditions of employment (other than disputes specifically about wages and hours); new awards; award restructuring; work practices; principles of promotion or deployment of staff including roster complaints and retrenchments; disciplinary matters including alleged victimization of union officials; employment of particular persons; disagreement with managerial decisions.

**Physical working conditions.** Disputes concerning physical working conditions and safety issues e.g. protective clothing and equipment; first aid services; uncomfortable working conditions; lack of, or the condition of, amenities; claims for assistance; shortage or poor distribution of equipment or material; condition of equipment; new production methods and equipment; arduous physical tasks.

**Trade unionism.** Disputes concerning employment of non-unionists, inter-union and intra-union disputes; sympathy stoppages in support of employees in another industry; recognition of union activities.

**Other.** Disputes concerning protests directed against persons or situations other than those relating to the employer/employee relationship e.g. political matters; fining and gaoing of persons; lack of work; lack of ade-

quate transport; non-award public holidays; accidents and attendance at funerals. Stoppages for which no reason is given are also included in this category.

**Disputes**

2. For these statistics, an *industrial dispute* is defined as a withdrawal from work by a group of employees, or a refusal by an employer or a number of employers to permit some or all of their employees to work, each withdrawal or refusal being made in order to enforce a demand, to resist a demand, or to express a grievance.

3. A dispute affecting several establishments is counted as a single dispute if it is organised or directed by one person or organisation in each State or Territory in which it occurs; otherwise it is counted as a separate dispute at each establishment (in each State or Territory) and in each industry in which it occurred. Prior to December 1987 disputes were counted differently (refer to paragraph 5 of the Explanatory Notes for other details).

4. When there is a return to work between stoppages over the same issue, and the return to work is for less than two complete calendar months, the stoppages are counted as a single dispute. When the return to work is for two or more calendar months, the dispute is considered to have ended at the time of the return to work. Should a subsequent stoppage occur, it is counted as a new dispute.

5. Information is recorded concerning all industrial disputes where ten or more working days are lost (see paragraph 1 of the Explanatory Notes). Included in these statistics are the following types of industrial disputes:

- unauthorised stopwork meetings;
- unofficial strikes;
- sympathetic strikes (e.g. strikes in support of a group of workers already on strike);
- political or protest strikes;
- general strikes;
- work stoppages initiated by employers (e.g. lockouts); and
- rotating or revolving strikes (i.e. strikes which occur when workers at different locations take turns to stop work).

Excluded from these statistics are work-to-rules, go-slows, bans (e.g. overtime bans) and sit-ins. In addition, industrial disputes in which employees resign are deemed to have been resolved. Statistics on those disputes will cease to be collected from the date of the employees' resignations.

**Duration of dispute**

6. The *duration* of a dispute is the average number of working days lost per employee involved in the dispute. The duration of the dispute is calculated by dividing the total number of working days lost in the dispute by the number of employees involved (both directly and indirectly).



## Employees

7. *Employees* refer to wage and salary earners only. Excluded are persons who are self-employed (e.g. building sub-contractors, owner-drivers of trucks) and employers.

8. *Employees directly involved* are those who actually participated in the dispute in order to enforce or resist a demand or to express a grievance.

9. *Employees indirectly involved* are those who ceased work at the establishment where the stoppages occurred, but who are not themselves parties to the dispute. Employees who ceased work at establishments other than those where the stoppages occurred are excluded. See paragraph 2 of the Explanatory Notes.

10. *Total employees involved* for any period of time are obtained by adding together the number of employees involved in each dispute in the period. For any period of time the figures may include details of the same employees involved in more than one dispute. The longer the period of reference, the more chance there is of some double counting in the number of employees involved. Where there are varying numbers of employees involved during the progress of a dispute, the figures of employees involved relate to the largest number of individual employees involved on any one day. Generally, the total number of employees involved for each year will equal the sum of the total number of employees involved in the first month of a year plus the number of employees newly involved in subsequent months. Differences between monthly and annual totals can occur due to the temporary cessation of stoppages which resume in subsequent months. Employees re-involved in this type of dispute are not classified as employees newly involved in stoppages in the second period in which the dispute occurs.

## Method of settlement

11. Statistics of the *method of settlement* of industrial disputes relate to the *method directly responsible for ending the stoppage of work* as reported and not necessarily to the method (or methods) responsible for settling all matters in dispute. For these reasons, they do not reflect the relative importance of the work of various industrial tribunals operating under State and Federal legislation. The classification of method of settlement is as follows:

*Negotiation.* Private negotiation between the parties involved, or their representatives, without the intervention or assistance of authorities constituted under State or Federal industrial legislation.

*State legislation.* Intervention or assistance of an industrial authority or authorities created by or constituted under State conciliation and arbitration or wages board legislation, or reference to such authorities or compulsory or voluntary conference. Intervention, assistance or advice of State government officials or inspectors.

*Federal and joint Federal-State legislation.* Compulsory or voluntary conference or by intervention or assistance, of, or reference to, the industrial relation commissions created by or constituted under the Industrial Relations Act, Coal Industry Acts, Stevedoring Industry Act, and other acts such as the Navigation Act; Public Service Arbitration Act. Intervention, assistance or advice of Federal government officials or inspectors.

*Resumption without negotiation.* This category may include some disputes which are settled subject to subsequent negotiation of a formal nature, such as industrial court hearings. Stop-work meetings are included, and this category may also include disputes settled by 'resumption' as stated, but about which no further information is available.

*Other methods.* Mediation; filling places of employees on strike or locked out; closing establishments permanently; dismissal or resignation of employees.

## Working days lost

12. *Working days lost* refer to working days lost by employees directly and indirectly involved in the dispute and figures are generally as reported by parties to the dispute. For some disputes working days lost are estimated on the basis of the number of employees involved and the duration of the dispute.

## Working days lost per thousand employees

13. *Working days lost per thousand employees* are calculated for the 12 month period from working days lost and estimates of employees obtained from the ABS Survey of Employment and Earnings and the ABS Labour Force Survey. Refer to paragraph 4 of the Explanatory Notes for details of the way in which these measures are calculated, and the change in the method of calculation from 1987.

